

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01564 240617Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
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O R 230755Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7226
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
USLO RIYADH
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1564

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 4. CORRECTED)

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PERP, PINS, LE, IS
SUBJ: REMARKS OF BASHIR GEMAYEL ON THE CURRENT SIUTATION

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF ON MARCH 22, LEBANESE FRONT
MILITARY COMMANDER BASHIR GEMAYEL SAID THE FOLLOWING:

2. THE KATAIB AND NLP HAD NOT SENT ARMED PEOPLE
SOUTH SINCE THE ISRAELI INVASION. SOME MEMBERS OF
THE KATAIB AND NLP WHO WERE ORIGINALLY FROM THE SOUTH
HAD RETURNED TO THEIR HOME VILLAGES, SOME AFTER AN
ABSENCE OF THREE YEARS OR MORE. THESE PEOPLE HAD GONE
OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL, HOWEVER, NOT AT THE DIRECTION
OF THE KATAIB OR NLP. (BASHIR DID NOT EXPLAIN BY WHAT
ROUTE THESE PEOPLE HAD RETURNED.)

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3. THE LEBANESE FRONT MILITARY HEADQUARTERS WAS IN
DIRECT RADIO CONTACT WITH THE CHRISTIANS IN THE SOUTH.
THE LATTER HAD SAID THEIR SITUATION HAD GREATLY
IMPROVED SINCE THE ISRAELI INCURSION. THEY WERE NOW
ABLE TO ENTER THEIR HOMES WITHOUT BEING SHOT AT AND WERE
ABLE TO WALK THROUGH THEIR VILLAGES WITHOUT FEAR OF

LOSING THEIR LIVES.

4. THE ISRAELI INVASION WAS UNLIKELY TO LEAD TO VOILENCE BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND MOSLEMS IN BEIRUT OR ELSEWHERE OUTSIDE OF SOUTH LEBANON. (DANY CHAMOUN REMARKED ON MARCH 20 THAT TROUBLE BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND DRUZE IN THE SHUF AT THE MOMENT WAS UNLIKELY.) THE LEBANESE FRONT WANTED TO AVOID TROUBLE NOW. IT COULD NOT AFFORD TO FIGHT THE PALESTINIANS, LEBANESE LEFTISTS, AND SYRIAN ARMY AT THE SAME TIME. MOREOVER, RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SYRIAN ARMY AND CHRISTIANS HAD IMPROVED CONSIDERABLY SINCE THE FIYYADIYAH INCIDENT, LARGELY BECAUSE THE SYRIANS NOW HAD FEWER ROADBLOCKS IN THE EAST BEIRUT AREA. ALSO, THE PALESTINIANS AND LEBANESE LEFTISTS HAD ENOUGH TROUBLE WITHOUT TAKING ON THE LEBANESE FRONT, SO THEY WOULD PROBABLY NOT START ANYTHING.

5. IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE ISRAELIS WITHDRAW FROM SOUTH LEBANON, BUT UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 425 WAS ENTIRELY INADEQUATE, BECAUSE IT FAILED TO DEAL WITH LEBANON'S MOST PRESSING PROBLEM, THE ARMED PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE. SOME MEMBERS OF THE PLO AT THE UN HAD PRESSURED THE LEBANESE DELEGATION AND PREVENTED IT FROM INCLUDING THIS PROBLEM IN THE RESOLUTION.

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6. UNITED NATIONS TROOPS COULD NOT INSURE SECURITY IN THE SOUTH. ONLY A STRONG LEBANESE ARMY COULD DO THAT. THE GOVERNMENT WAS, HOWEVER, AT THE MOMENT INCAPABLE OF SENDING EVEN A TOKEN SOURCE TO SOUTH LEBANON. IT WOULD NOT EVEN BE ABLE TO SEND 1,000 SOLDIERS SOUTH IN THE FORESEEABLEFUTURE. (BY CONTRAST, DANY CHAMOUN COMMENTED ON MARCH 20 THE GOL WOULD BE ABLE TO SEND 1,000 SOLDIERS AND 200 POLICEMEN TO THE SOUTH WITHIN TWO WEEKS.)

7. THE ISRAELI INVASION HAD DRIVEN THE PALESTINIANS NORTH, WHERE THEY WERE EVEN MORE DANGEROUS THAN WHEN THEY WERE IN THE SOUTH. IT HAD UPROOTED 160.000 PEOPLE, CAUSING VERY SERIOUS SECURITY PROBLEMS IN BEIRUT.

8. ACCORDING TO KATAIB INFORMATION, THE IRAQIS HAD SENT ABOUT 1500 VOLUNTEERS AS WELL AS SOME ARMS AND AMMUNITION TO SOUTH LEBANON SINCE THE ISRAELI INVASION.

9. BASHIR ALSO VEHEMENTLY DENOUNCED WHAT HE CALLED UNITED

STATES MISUNDERSTANDING OF LEBANON. AS HE HAS OFTEN
DONE, BASHIR COMPLAINED THAT SARKIS AND HIS
GOVERNMENT WERE WEAK AND INEFFECTIVE. UNITED STATES
MILITARY AID WAS TOTALLY USELESS. THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT
NEED EQUIPMENT, BUT THE WILL TO GOVERN.
PARKER

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